



Warrant Article 14: Fossil Fuel-Free Infrastructure Demonstration

Arlington Special Town Meeting, October 2023

Ryan Katofsky, Chair, Clean Energy Future Committee

Talia Fox, Sustainability Manager, Dept. of Planning & Community Development



Electrifying buildings is a Net Zero Action Plan (NZAP) Priority

- NZAP is Arlington's roadmap to net zero greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2050
- Key strategy is electrifying buildings
- Priority measure: "Prohibit fossil fuel heating systems in new construction and major renovations"



Arlington's 2020 Clean Heat Bylaw

- In 2020, 92% of Town Meeting Members voted to enact a Clean Heat Bylaw and home rule petition
- MA Legislature never approved clean heat home rule petitions, so the Attorney General could not approve ordinances or bylaws restricting fossil fuel infrastructure
- MA Legislature instead authorized creation of Municipal Fossil Fuel-Free Building Demonstration Program



Municipal Fossil Fuel-Free Building Demonstration Program

- Up to 10 municipalities may implement fossil fuel-free ordinances or bylaws if they meet all requirements by February 11, 2024
- To participate, Arlington must re-adopt Clean Heat Bylaw
- Department of Energy Resources (DOER) created Model Rule that municipalities are strongly encouraged to adopt
- Program applicants must explain deviations from Model Rule

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/municipal-fossil-fuel-free-building-demonstration-program>



Goals of Warrant Article 14

1. Align 2020 Clean Heat Bylaw with the DOER Model Rule and recently updated Stretch Code and Specialized Stretch Code (“Specialized Code”)
2. Align 2020 Clean Heat Bylaw with recent advances in technology and research

Proposed updated bylaw retains original intent and much of the original content of the 2020 Clean Heat Bylaw



Summary of Proposed Updates to 2020 Clean Heat Bylaw

- 1. Enforcement framework that aligns with Specialized Code.**
Eliminates pathways in Specialized Code that allow fossil fuels.
- 2. Updates to definition of major renovation** to align thresholds with Specialized Code and Model Rule.
 - Residential = >50% of existing conditioned floor area AND >1,000 sq ft
 - Commercial = >50% of existing conditioned floor area OR >20,000 sq ft



Summary of Proposed Updates to 2020 Clean Heat Bylaw

- 3. **Removal of exemption for indoor cooking appliances** to match Model Rule and respond to research on public health impacts of gas stoves. Waiver process still available.
- 4. **Updates to multifamily building domestic hot water exemption** to match Model Rule and Specialized Code (10,000 → 12,000 sq ft) and set deadline for sunset of the exemption (January 1, 2027).
- 5. **Update of effective date for bylaw** to reflect advances in policy and technology since passage of 2020 Clean Heat Bylaw.



What Has Not Changed

- Does **not** apply to building **additions and changes of use**
- Retains provisions for **waivers and appeals**
- Retains **exemptions** for
 - Research and medical facilities
 - Hot water for large buildings
 - Utility-side connections
 - Backup generators
 - Portable propane appliances
 - Extension or modification of existing fossil fuel heating systems
 - Repair of existing, unsafe piping



Impacts of Fossil Fuel-Free Bylaw / Demonstration Program

- Prohibits new fossil fuel piping and appliances in new construction and major renovations
- In 2022, in Arlington, there were:
 - 24 new homes (12 all-electric)
 - 42 major home renovations (23 single-family, 19 duplexes)
 - 2 new commercial buildings
 - 2 major commercial renovations

